

Summary of Meeting September 11, 2013

Thirty five were in attendance including reps from 15 member organizations.

Members not represented:

36th District Democrats
36th District Green Party
Ballard Landmark Resident Association
Ballard Rotary
Ballard Place Condominiums
Ballard High School PTSA
Ballard NW Senior Center
Canal Station Condominium Association
Nordic Heritage Museum
Norwegian Commercial Club
Sunset Hill Community Association
Whittier Heights Community Council

Action Summary:

- MSP – authorize a letter to be signed jointly with: Ballard Chamber, CBRA, and Ballard Food Bank which conveys a position statement requesting and justifying additional SPD resources. See below

The Case for a Stronger Police Presence in Ballard

Rapid Residential Growth in Ballard

Ballard is a complex urban community with an industrial area, shopping and entertainment venues that draw increasing numbers of visitors and residents. Central Ballard alone has nearly 40,000 residents and Ballard is seeing continued, rapid growth and increased density. According to the most recent census figures, the Urban Center/Village of Ballard grew by 24% between 2000 and 2010.

Seattle's most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan update (2004) set the growth target for 2024 at 1,000 new residential units. By the end of 2011 the actual growth was 150% of target. There are now more than 800 new residential units in projects under construction. Further, more than 1,000 additional units are either in the permit phase or are waiting financing. By the next Comprehensive Land Use Plan update in 2014, Ballard residential units could very well exceed growth by 300% of the targeted growth.

Existing Police Services Not Meeting Current Demand

Ballard is served by the North Police Precinct that covers an area of 32 square miles containing 43 % of the total Seattle population (265,000 residents). Central Ballard is also seven miles from the current North Precinct headquarters.

According Seattle Police Department 2013 Crime Statistics:

- Through May 2013, three precincts show decreases in major crimes when compared with the same time period in 2012. The South and West Precincts are down 15%, the East Precinct is down by 6%. **Major crimes in the North Precinct have increased by 1%.**
- In May, the South Precinct reported less than half the number of major crimes than did the North Precinct. In fact, major crimes month by month from January 2012 through May 2013 show that the South Precinct has less than half the major crimes of the North Precinct including Ballard, Fremont and the University District.

The current allocation of police resources is of great concern to us in rapidly growing Ballard.

Slow Response Times Fuel the Fire of Threatening Situations

The Seattle Police Department needs to provide faster response time to 911 incident calls. There are several examples of slow response times that have prolonged dangerous and life-threatening situations:

1. At the Healthcare for the Homeless Clinic located at St. Luke's church this spring, it took over 45 minutes for police to respond to an emergency call about a threatening man with a knife. He was finally arrested and taken away, but the Priest had to step in to assist staff.
2. In early July, parents with two young children in Salmon Bay Park called 911 to report that a young man tried to seize two children in the playground area. Despite several calls to 911 from parents, the police did not arrive for an hour. By the time Police arrived the young man had left the park and was not apprehended.
3. The Ballard Food Bank routinely experiences long waits of more than 30 minutes to respond to emergency calls of threats of violence.

The Seattle Police Department's Presence in the Ballard Community Must be Strengthened

The Ballard community requests that the City of Seattle police department implement the following strategies that will help ensure that police services match the needs of Ballard residents and business owners.

- Assign foot beat police officers to patrol around parks including Ballard Commons Park and the central business area (Ballard Commons Park has had four alcohol related deaths and several heroin overdoses reported either within the park or on the nearby block in the last several months);
- Deploy regular Bike Patrols throughout the neighborhood with a focus on the Central Ballard core;
- Provide police officers that maintain a regular Ballard presence and are sited at the Neighborhood Service Center at 22nd NW and NW 56th.
- Move the North Precinct closer to Central Ballard, divide the North Precinct into NW and NE Precincts or provide a police substation for Ballard.

While we appreciate there are city-wide needs for police resources, we cannot deny the facts that Ballard is growing at incredible speed, crime is on the increase in Ballard, police response times are too slow and existing resources are spread too thin.

We urge that you strongly consider implementing the strategies outlined above.

It is vital to our community's safety that the Seattle Police Department takes a proactive approach in addressing the escalating needs in urban Ballard based on the relative incidence of crime.